

**WHAT IS CLAIMED:**

1. A method of distributing hair care or cosmetic products on demand at the point-of-use, comprising the steps of:
  - locating a vending device in a salon;
  - purchasing one or more hair care or cosmetic products from said vending device by a professional hair or beauty care provider to provide transaction data;
  - transmitting said transaction data to a central computer over a communications network;
  - updating inventory data for said vending device based on said transaction data; and
  - scheduling delivery based on said updated inventory data.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of purchasing comprises the step of authenticating said professional hair or beauty care provider to determine if said professional hair or beauty care provider is authorized to access said vending device.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the step of purchasing comprises the step of receiving payment information from said professional hair or beauty care provider and verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products if it is determined that said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
6. The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message and inhibiting said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from being dispensed if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said profession hair or beauty care provider.
8. A method of managing client relationships and distributing hair care and cosmetic products on demand at the point-of-use, comprising the steps of:
  - locating a vending device in a salon;
  - accessing said vending device by an operator to purchase one or more hair care or cosmetic products;
  - authenticating said operator to determine if said operator is authorized to access said vending device; and
  - dispensing said one or more hair care or cosmetic products to said operator if it is determined that said operator is authorized to access said vending device.
9. The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:
  - receiving payment information from said operator; and
  - verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message and inhibiting said one or more hair care or cosmetic products from being dispensed if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair care or cosmetic products.
11. The method of claim 8, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair care or cosmetic products purchased by said operator if it is determined that said operator is authorized to access said vending device.
12. A method of distributing a customized hair care or cosmetic product having a plurality of shades at a point-of-use to a professional user, comprising the steps of:
  - selecting a shade from said plurality of shades associated with said hair care or cosmetic product by said professional user;
  - determining an amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said professional user;

delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product at the point-of-use to said professional user.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of mixing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product prior to delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product to said professional user.
14. The method of claim 12, further comprising the steps of:
  - receiving payment information from said professional user; and
  - verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said hair care or cosmetic product.
15. The method of claim 14, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said hair care or cosmetic product.
16. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of selecting comprises the step of receiving a product sku number from said professional user.
17. The method of claim 12, wherein the step of selecting comprises the step of displaying a set of said plurality of shades at a time on a display device to said professional user.
18. The method of 12, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said prepared hair care or cosmetic product.
19. A vending apparatus for distributing a customized hair care or cosmetic product having a plurality of shades at a point-of-use to a professional user, comprising:
  - a user interface for selecting a shade from said plurality of shades associated with said hair care or cosmetic product by said professional user;
  - a processor for determining an amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said professional user;
  - a plurality of reservoirs, each containing different base stock color of said hair care or cosmetic product, for dispensing determined amount of the respective

base stock color into a tray to provide said shade of said hair care or cosmetic product; and

a dispensing device for delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product at the point-of-use to said professional user.

20. The vending apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a mixing device for mixing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product.
21. The vending apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a device for receiving payment information from said professional user; and wherein said processor is operable to verify said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said hair care or cosmetic product.
22. The vending apparatus of claim 21, further comprising a display device for displaying an insufficient fund message if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said hair care or cosmetic product.
23. The vending apparatus of claim 19, wherein said user interface is a keypad and said keypad is operable to receive a product sku number from said professional user.
24. The vending apparatus of claim 19, wherein said display device is operable to a set of said plurality of shades at a time on said display device to said professional user; and wherein said keypad is operable by said professional user to select said shade from said set of said plurality shades displayed on said display device.
25. The vending apparatus of claim 19, wherein said hair care or cosmetic product is a hair dye product.
26. The vending apparatus of claim 19, further comprising a printer for printing a receipt for said prepared hair care or cosmetic product.
27. A method of distributing hair color products on demand at the point-of-use, comprising the steps of:
  - locating a vending device in a salon;

purchasing one or more hair color products from said vending device by a cosmologists or other licensed hair care provider to provide transaction data;

transmitting said transaction data to a central computer over a communications network;

updating inventory data for said vending device based on said transaction data; and

scheduling delivery based on said updated inventory data.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein the step of purchasing comprises the step of authenticating said cosmologists or other licensed hair care provider to determine if said cosmologists or other licensed hair care provider is authorized to access said vending device.
29. The method of claim 27, further comprising the step of dispensing said one or more hair color products.
30. The method of claim 28, wherein the step of purchasing comprises the step of receiving payment information from said cosmologists or other licensed hair care provider and verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair color products.
31. The method of claim 30, further comprising the step of dispensing said one or more hair color products if it is determined that said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair color products.
32. The method of claim 31, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message and inhibiting said one or more hair color products from being dispensed if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair color products.
33. The method of claim 31, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair color products purchased by said cosmologists or other licensed hair care provider.

34. A method of managing client relationships and distributing hair color products on demand at the point-of-use, comprising the steps of:
- locating a vending device in a salon;
  - accessing said vending device by an operator to purchase one or more hair color products;
  - authenticating said operator to determine if said operator is authorized to access said vending device; and
  - dispensing said one or more hair color products to said operator if it is determined that said operator is authorized to access said vending device.
35. The method of claim 34, further comprising the steps of:
- receiving payment information from said operator; and
  - verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair color products.
36. The method of claim 35, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message and inhibiting said one or more hair color products from being dispensed if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said one or more hair color products.
37. The method of claim 34, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said one or more hair color products purchased by said operator if it is determined that said operator is authorized to access said vending device.
38. A method of distributing a customized hair color product having a plurality of shades at a point-of-use to a professional user, comprising the steps of:
- selecting a hair color shade from said plurality of shades associated with said hair color product by said professional user;
  - determining an amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said professional user;
  - delivering said tray containing said prepared hair care or cosmetic product at the point-of-use to said professional user.

39. The method of claim 29, further comprising the steps of mixing said prepared hair color product prior to delivering said tray containing said prepared hair color product to said professional user.
40. The method of claim 29, further comprising the steps of:  
receiving payment information from said professional user; and  
verifying said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said hair color product.
41. The method of claim 31, further comprising the steps of displaying an insufficient fund message if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said hair color product.
42. The method of claim 29, wherein the step of selecting comprises the step of receiving a product sku number from said professional user.
43. The method of claim 29, wherein the step of selecting comprises the step of displaying a set of said plurality of shades at a time on a display device to said professional user.
44. The method of 29, further comprising the step of printing a receipt for said prepared hair color product.
45. A vending apparatus for distributing a customized hair color product having a plurality of shades at a point-of-use to a professional user, comprising:  
a user interface for selecting a shade from said plurality of shades associated with said hair color product by said professional user;  
a processor for determining an amount of each base stock color required to prepare said shade selected by said professional user;  
a plurality of reservoirs, each containing different base stock color of said hair color products, for dispensing determined amount of the respective base stock color into a tray to provide said shade of said hair color product; and  
a dispensing device for delivering said tray containing said prepared hair color product at the point-of-use to said professional user.

46. The vending apparatus of claim 45, further comprising a mixing device for mixing said prepared hair color product.
47. The vending apparatus of claim 45, further comprising a device for receiving payment information from said professional user; and wherein said processor is operable to verify said payment information is sufficient to cover the cost of said hair color product.
48. The vending apparatus of claim 47, further comprising a display device for displaying an insufficient fund message if it is determined that said payment information is insufficient to cover the cost of said hair color product.
49. The vending apparatus of claim 45, wherein said user interface is a keypad and said keypad is operable to receive a product sku number from said professional user.
50. The vending apparatus of claim 45, wherein said display device is operable to a set of said plurality of shades at a time on said display device to said professional user; and wherein said keypad is operable by said professional user to select said shade from said set of said plurality shades displayed on said display device.
51. The vending apparatus of claim 45, further comprising a printer for printing a receipt for said prepared hair color product.